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Spine Rise

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Cover Page Footnote

This piece was written and workshopped for 17F.

Spine Rise

Phoebe's hips cracked over the sink. It was a routine thing. Part of washing the day off. It didn't hurt anymore; the tracks of the pain on her rounded bones were so well-worn that nothing felt violated. Nothing felt new. The faucet pressed up on her belly, the mirror locked up her gaze, the clock's time, read backwards, pushed its sharp-nailed red fingers up under her lids. She had to let it. She did nothing to the porcelain, the glass, the tile, the water; everything done was done to her.

It wasn't really even, in that sense. More a theft of a good face than a cleanse of a rotted one. Hot water slapped her cheeks, frosted the end of her nose, stripped paint out of her eyes. Scariness became her. Soaking dogs and sweaty people and weirder things – everything flooded into her face and remade her for a wet minute. Then the intermediate face dripped away, as every night, and left something original. Something the scorching water could be pleased with, could take down the drain! The air patted her dry. The heat left her. The sink pushed her off its shoulders. The door escorted her out while the blackening of the room scrubbed her out. Phoebe's hips cracked as her legs walked her to sleep, and they broke when she *herself* rose in the morning.